

LANL Work Environment Survey Frequently Asked Questions

What is the LANL Work Environment Survey?

The LANL Work Environment Survey is a survey proposed by Laboratory employees and sponsored by the Lab's Diversity/OEO office to assess LANL employee attitudes and opinions regarding the Lab's work environment, to determine the key predictors of employee work morale and to garner suggestions for addressing concerns.

Who developed the survey?

The Laboratory's Work Environment Survey Committee, which consists of a diverse group of employees, developed the survey. Committee members volunteered to work on the survey during a joint diversity meeting more than two years ago. Members are Lorraine Segura of Integrated Risk Analysis, Management and Communication (ESH-3), chair; Bennie Martinez Environmental Technology of (E-ET), vice-chair; Kien-Yin "Jean" Lee of High Explosives Science and Technology (DX-2); Kent Croasdell of Hydrodynamic and X-Ray Physics (P-22); Esther Selfridge of Training and Development (HR-6); Ruben Rangel of the Environment, Safety and Health (ESH) Division; Wendee Brunish of the Earth and Environmental Science (EES) Division; Mike Maloney of Integrated Risk Analysis, Management, and Communication (ESH-3); Veronique Longmire of the Diversity Office (DVO); Mick Trujillo of the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO); and Julie Johnston of Ecology (ESH-20). Former members are Betty Harris of OEO; Allan Mackinnon, formerly of the Computing, Information and Communications (CIC) Division; and Frank Stonehouse of Business Support Services (BUS-8).

Who conducted the survey?

Research and Polling, Inc. of Albuquerque, an independent public opinion research company, administered the survey and prepared the survey-findings report to ensure anonymity to respondents.

Who received a survey, when and how?

The survey was sent to all full- and part-time LANL UC employees (7,001) in August 1999. It was distributed through the Lab's interoffice mail and returned by respondents directly to Research & Polling through the postal service.

How many surveys were returned?

Employees completed and returned 2,904 surveys (a 41percent-response rate).

What kind of format was used in the survey?

The survey included 55 items and included both closed-end rating questions and open-ended items to identify other issues important to Lab employees. Statements were rated as “strongly agree (5),” “agree (4),” “neutral (3),” “disagree (2),” “strongly disagree (1)” and “don’t know/doesn’t apply (6).” Employees were asked to respond to each statement and to base their answers on personal experience and perceptions. If a statement did not apply to an employee’s situation or the employee honestly did not know how to respond, he/she was asked to circle the response “don’t know/doesn’t apply.”

What were the key findings?

Morale was a major issue for employees who responded to the survey, and six key areas that affect employee morale were identified:

- mechanisms for resolving employee concerns
- promotion and hiring practices
- the compensation system
- diversity education
- professional development
- management training program.

How many written comments were received

Nearly 300 pages of written comments were compiled from the completed surveys. Representative comments relating to the six key issues are included in the survey report. The complete set of comments can be reviewed in the Diversity Office, located at 800 Trinity Drive, Suite H, above Baskin-Robbins 31 Flavors in Los Alamos town site, and through division and program offices.

What will be done with the survey findings?

Results of the study will be used to help Lab management determine how best to address issues and concerns raised by employees, especially with regard to the six key areas that were identified. “Action owners” will be assigned to each of the six key areas to ensure that steps are taken to resolve concerns and problems in these areas. An action owner will be a senior-level manager under whose oversight a key area generally falls. For instance, the Human Resources director may be the action owner for “mechanisms for resolving employee concerns.” As action owner, the HR director will lead a team that will include “process owners” and “results owners.”

Process owners are responsible for the mechanisms, procedures or means by which concerns are resolved. Process owners who might address the mechanisms for resolving employee concerns issue include Staff Relations, the Ombuds Office, the Complaint

Resolution Office, the Diversity Office, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Internal Evaluation.

Results owners are those individuals responsible for working within the processes and implementing agreed on courses of action to address issues. These include division leaders, group leaders and employee volunteers.

How can employees volunteer to help management address the issues that came out of the survey, especially the six key areas that were identified?

Laboratory management currently is looking at mechanisms for engaging employees in this effort and will keep employees informed.

How much did the Work Environment Survey Cost?

\$50,000

How is the Work Environment Survey different from the Lab's annual Checkpoint Survey?

The Checkpoint Survey, conducted by Human Resources Division, serves as a measure to indicate areas where the Laboratory is improving, as well as those areas that the Laboratory may need to address. The survey results provide a benchmark to compare the Laboratory with other research and development organizations that conduct employee surveys. The 1999 Checkpoint survey contained questions that focused on career development, teamwork, job satisfaction, communication, customer emphasis, management, productivity, performance management, diversity, safety and salary issues. The major difference between the Work Environment Survey and the Checkpoint Survey is that employees led the impetus for the Work Environment Survey, and employees developed the questionnaire, focusing on areas that employees want management to address.

How do response rates for the Work Environment Survey and the Checkpoint Survey compare?

Checkpoint surveys went out to all UC/LANL employees, as did the Work Environment Survey; 3,446 Checkpoint surveys were completed for a return rate of 46 percent. The Work Environment Survey had a 41 percent return rate. About 1,533 written comments were received for the Checkpoint Survey; nearly 300 pages of comments were received for the Work Environment Survey.

Note: 1999 Checkpoint Survey and results are online at d/checkpoint/checkpoint.htm <http://www.hr.lanl.gov/td/checkpoint/checkpoint.htm>.

Any similarities between the two surveys, with regard to questions?

Yes, there were three similar statements in the surveys:

Work environment accepting of ethnic/cultural differences: In the Work Environment Survey 81 percent agreed and 7 percent disagreed. In the Checkpoint Survey 84 percent agreed and 6 percent disagreed.

Acceptance regardless of my gender. In the Work Environment Survey 84 percent agreed and 6 percent disagreed. In the Checkpoint survey 84 percent agreed and 7 percent disagreed.

My supervisor is held accountable for his/her actions by the next level of management. In the Work Environment Survey 54 percent agreed and 21 percent disagreed. This question was worded slightly different in the Checkpoint survey, with the word *immediate* coming before supervisor. The Checkpoint Survey results showed 70 percent agreed and 17 percent disagreed.

Will there be a follow-up to the survey to assess improvements?

Yes. The form and time of such a follow up currently is under consideration.